

Climax . .  
*before and  
after*



*Welcome  
Visitors  
and  
Pioneers*





# CLIMAX

## *Before and After*

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# CLIMAX . . .

## *before and after*

The history of the district, now known as the Climax district, dates back to the period when the ranchers took over from the Indians and buffalo. For much of the information concerning that period, we are indebted to Harry Otterson,

The T-Down Bar came over from Montana in 1902 and their cattle ranged from well into the Cypress Hills to north of Val Marie, and unlimited miles South so it may be assumed that the ranchers took over from the Indians around the



PICNIC AT THE T-DOWN RANCH IN THE EARLY DAYS

who came over the line from the south in the year 1895 with a round-up wagon, the party scouring the territory for cattle from West of the Cypress Hills, East to Lone Tree Lake. At that time there were a few ranchers scattered along the banks of Boluanger Creek.

The first big outfit that settled along the White Mud (Frenchman Creek) was the Turkey Track outfit, whose cattle ranged from north of Val Marie to Wood Mountain, their West camp being on the land later operated by Bill Huff. The Huff ranch was sold in the late forties to the P.F.R.A. who constructed an irrigation project on it.

After the killing winters of 1906 and 1907, the Turkey Track sold out to Gordon, Ironsides and Fares, who established the "76" Ranch with Harry Otterson as manager.

year 1900.

Buck Hardin, a present resident of Shaunavon, was the first manager of the T-Down (Bloom Land & Cattle Co.) until he went to the Z-X (Enright & Strong) outfit. The town of Eastend was later built on the Z-X property.

Harry Otterson and his wife came over from Malta in 1906. They ran into a three-day snowstorm. All they could see when crossing the "Line" was a wide expanse of snow, and after a day's travel they landed at the home of the late Dan Morrison on the flat East of Eastend. Mrs. Otterson's anxiety to meet another woman was relieved when Mrs. Morrison came out of the house to greet them.

Gordon, Ironsides & Fares' first camp was East of the bridge later known as Watson's bridge. This



was one of the first bridges constructed over the White Mud River. It stood on property they had purchased from the late George Watson, some 400 acres. Later they moved 25 miles down the river, purchasing a cabin and cattle from a Mr. Broadfoot. This was the ranch headquarters and was known as the Stone Pile Ranch, the name being suggested by a pile of stones, built by the R.C.M.P. who had a detachment cornering the present Eastend townsite. The police having no other landmark to guide them home built a pile of stones. A story goes that when the homesteaders came into the district they got the idea there was gold hidden under the stone pile and to satisfy their curiosity, some of them raised the pile. Some homesteaders later hauled many of the stones away for foundations for their buildings.

The company had another camp west of the War Holes, formerly owned by a man named Bates, who moved into Alberta. The Range then extended from East of the R.C.M.P. barracks, Eastend, to Val Marie. Gordon, Ironsides & Fares brought into the country several thousand head of cattle, but after the severe winters of 1906 and 1907 there were not many left. They carried on, however, until 1910, when the homesteaders came in and they realized that the days of open range were over.

Harry Otterson homesteaded in the year 1912. The company by that time had sold the West leases to the Morrison Brothers.

The known river crossings at this period, which the Indians had used in their journeying to and from Montana, were Watson's, McGuire's and "70 mile" (now Val Marie). There was another named Breed Crossing, 20 miles down the river from "70 mile."

From 1908 to 1910 a few ranchers settled along the banks of the White Mud, amongst those being Corbett Bros., G. L. Greenlay, Bill Kyle, Bill Moore, McGuires and later McNaught Bros., White Bros. and Angus Dalgleish.

Land south of the White Mud was opened for homesteading in 1909, the nearest land office being Moose Jaw. Among those who filed there were John Kluzak and his son George, Tom Holm, Commodore, Huntley and McIlveen. John and George Kluzak claim to be the first of those who took up residence, building their shacks in the spring of 1910. Tom Holm claims to be the fourth who filed.

These earliest settlers settled in what later became the Canuck Postal District. A factor which may have accounted for this was that the Battleford, Swift Current, Montana trail ran through that district, crossing the now 46 Highway between section 7 in township 3, range 16, and section 12, in township 3, range 17. It then angled down through Jack Mooney's land and on through Hahnkamp's to the Montana border.

The only other well-known defined trail was the Wood Mountain-Maple Creek Trail. This trail was struck out by the R.N.W.M.P. It crossed the river at "70-mile" crossing (Val Marie), angled northwest across Tom Stuart's farm North of Orkney, across Ed. Benson's farm North of Bracken, crossing the river at what was known as the Severson Crossing to the Harry Fell farm and crossed No. 37 highway at the point where the Jubilee Committee have erected a canopy. From thence it angled in a Northwesterly direction, touching North of the now townsite of Eastend on to Maple Creek.

Joe Keen claims to be the first to take up residence in the territory South of Climax. This was in the Spring of 1910. His first neighbors were Seymour Smith, who filed on the land on which is now located Treelon Port of Entry. Harry Masters, James and Andy Brown quickly followed and later Frank Mitchell and Frank Humphries. Some of these early settlers filed "blind" and it cost \$35.00 to get a "locator" to drive them down and locate their section stakes.

Lumber for buildings had to be hauled from Gull Lake, a distance

of from 70 to 100 miles. Some of the settlers who located near the border found it cheaper to haul from Harlem, Montana. Customs regulations not being enforced very rigidly at that time, many a load of lumber, coal and other supplies came from Montana in the early days.

Until 1913 when the steel came into Shaunavon, the nearest point to deliver grain was Gull Lake. This took a week and was costly, necessitating stopping over at stopping places to spend the night and rest the horses or oxen. With the price of wheat at a low figure and farming small areas of newly broken land, farming was not a very lucrative business. Living was pretty slim and luxuries out of the question. Many a homesteader used prairie chips for fuel, as there was no money to buy coal.

Of the many stopping places, one of the most notable was at Crosswaite's, located on the river valley on the now No. 37 highway. Later it was sold to Tom Icke, then Angus Willett, who later sold it to the present owner, C. B. Clark.

Many of those who originally used Amelia transferred to Waldville P.O. when it was opened later.

The original Climax post office was located three miles southeast of the present townsite on sec. 6, township 3, range 18. The first postmaster was Charlie Truswell. On his death he was succeeded by Volley Stephenson, the location being moved east to the Stephenson farm. The name Climax was chosen by Fred and Christ Fuglestad, who came here from Climax, Minn.

According to Joe Keen, farmers along the border got their first mail from Harlem, Montana, later from Twete, Montana, and still later from Turner, Montana, 12 miles south of the International Line. At that time Turner was situated in a valley, being moved to the present location in 1927 when a branch railway line was opened through that country.

Amelia post office was operated by Andrew Huseby, who named it after his wife, who spelled her name Emelia. Andrew substituted A for E and called the post office Amelia. Mr. Huseby also operated a store



Chas. Howlett leaves Climax with load of mail for Bracken & Orkney

To get mail was quite a proposition in the early days. Some went for their mail as far as Cloverly post office, T. Bentley being postmaster. Cloverly was located south of Dollard. Later Amelia post office was opened northwest of Climax.

and supplied the needs of life, saving the farmers many a trip to town to get a bag of flour or oatmeal.

The first postmaster of Waldville P.O. was Tom Waldie. The name Waldville was, no doubt, se-

lected by the first postmaster from his own name. Mr. Waldie sold out to Alfred Gryde and the business was later taken over by John E. Gryde of beloved memory. Waldville, by reason of the store and post office, became a district. John Gryde carried everything from a keg of nails to material for the babies' diapers. Many a farmer had to thank John Gryde for supplying them with groceries when there was no money to pay for them. Much of this money was never paid.

changed to Climax S. D. in 1930.

Stone School was built in 1914. The first name chosen was Stonepile in reference to the pile of stones mentioned earlier in this narrative. This was disallowed as there was already a Stonepile school in the district. So the trustees named it Stone school. One of the earlier teachers of Stone school was Mrs. J. Francis, now a resident of Climax. Stone school was noted for its community activities and many a happy dance was enjoyed



Squatters' Row in Climax, before moving to surveyed locations.

Other combined post offices and stores were Rapdan, operated by Louis Anderson, and Karluk, operated by Ole Heggstad, North and South of Frontier.

As time progressed, families grew up and the need for schools became important. One of the first was Glenedyth. It is reported that the name was chosen by E. J. Hinkson, whose wife's name was Edyth. Glenedyth School was built in 1913 on the land SW 17-3-18w3. When the school was moved to Climax village in 1925, the building was acquired by A. H. Stevens, who opened a printing business and founded the "Climax Weekly Newspaper." Mr. Stevens moved the printing office into town in the fall of 1925. The late W. P. Goff purchased the old school property. In 1928 two additional rooms were built and a fine high school building was completed and opened in September, 1954. The name was

under its roof.

In 1913 Treelon post office, located two miles North of the international border, was opened, the first postmaster being Ed. Way. He was succeeded by Mrs. A. Hillman, who held the position until the P.O. was closed in 1945.

In the year 1914 families in the Canuck district decided they needed a school and a meeting was called at the house of John Kluzak, sr. The name chosen for this school was Taber. It was chosen by Mr. Kluzak from the small town near where he homesteaded in 1885 close to East Grand Forks, Minnesota.

The inspiration for the name goes back even further to the little town of Taber in Czechoslovakia, where Mr. Kluzak was born. Lumber for Taber school was hauled from Shaunavon and the school built in 1915 by Mr. Skogstad.

Other schools erected in the district were Cherry Valley, Canuck,



Lone Trail, Plateau and later Vi-dette, being named after a battle cruiser of that name on which Mr. Richard Waugh served when he was in the navy. Tree-ten was named after the lone tree that stood on the banks of Lone Tree Lake. It died in 1912. Much indignation was felt by the natives one morning when it was found that someone, who apparently needed a log, had chopped the tree down in the summer of 1913.

ties. In 1927 the Canadian office of Customs was built on the border at the South extremity of Highway 37. Duncan McIntosh, who succeeded Mr. Stroud, was in charge.

The Rural Municipality of Lone Tree No. 18 was founded on the 5th day of January, 1914. Alfred Gryde was first secretary-treasurer. He was succeeded by a Mr. Robertson who handed the books over to J. A. McGillivray. Until the town of Climax was built the R.M. office



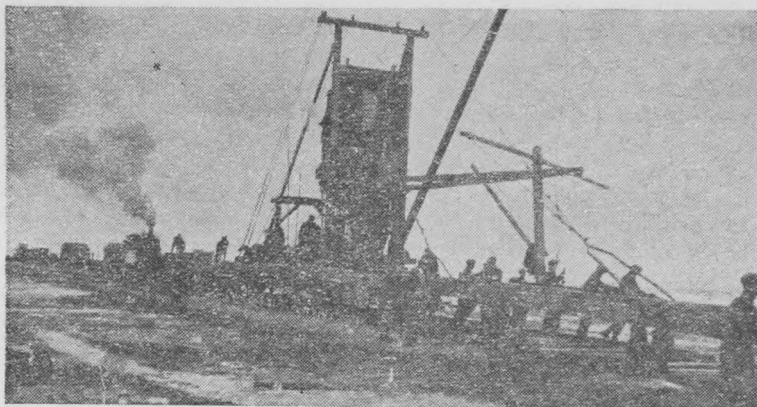
FIRST COUNCIL MEETING OF THE R. M. OF LONE TREE HELD IN CLIMAX. Personnel: J. Honey, M. Maycock, W. Patterson, J. Hahnkamp, J. Tooth, C. Grimshaw, J. Cosgrove, J. McGillivray (standing in doorway).

With the settlers came the law and a mountie was stationed North of Climax on the Brooks farm, now farmed by Charlie Bertram. Both a policeman and a customs officer were placed near the border, having their quarters at the farm of the late John Hahnkamp. The first police officers at these points were: Const. Billy McGregor, Const. Billy Sneaden, Const. Mott and Const. Griff. Customs regulations up to that time were practically ignored and even after an officer was stationed in the district were not rigidly enforced. But things changed when a customs office was opened in Climax with A. B. Stroud in charge, and a customs and immigration office was established in Turner by the American authori-

ties. was at the McGillivray farm near the present town of Bracken. The first council was: G. W. Patterson, reeve; J. Cosgrove, deputy reeve; with councillors S. Crowell, G. A. Klusak, E. M. Shuttleworth, Thos. F. Harris and Daniel Keys.

After many surveys and conjunctions as to where the railroad was finally to be built, the final grade was established and grading started in 1922. Steel reached Climax in 1924 and was extended East to Val Marie in the spring of 1925.

Before the townsite was surveyed business men came in and squatted on the high land on the East side of the present town, all being moved to their permanent locations when the CPR completed the town survey in 1923. Fred and the late



Railway comes to Climax.—Laying steel in 1924.

Christ Fuglestad claim the honor of naming the town Climax, as they had moved here from a district by the same name in Minnesota.

General stores, hardware, three lumber yards, two doctors, two dentists, a jeweller, law office, two pool rooms, several restaurants or eating houses quickly sprang up and the Union Bank opened a branch in the building now occupied by J. Keen, with Rex Roberts as manager.

counter by Dick Patterson. A few card tables, pool tables and refreshment counter completed the picture. Here, when there was no other place available, a Chautauqua program (3 days) was held, planks being placed over the pool tables to provide a platform, and it is rumored that at a tense moment when one of the plays was being enacted, a voice came from behind the stage "I'll raise yer ten," accompanied by the jingle of poker

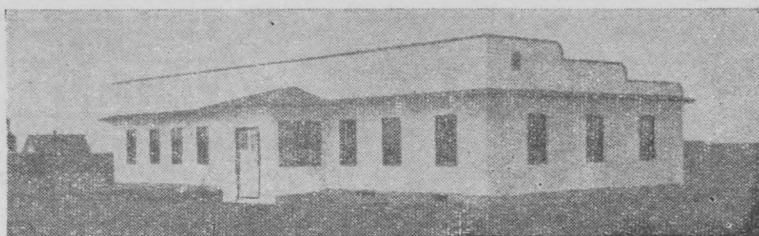


Climax Residential section looking South, in the 'Twenties

The centre of activity was the Silver Dollar, operated by Clark Walters and R. E. Robinson. Here patrons found entertainment to satisfy the inner man. A 24-hour service supplied steaks, hamburgers and eggs "and"—and all fried before the customers' eyes behind the

chips.

In 1925 a warehouse, erected by one of the early merchants, was purchased by public subscription and opened as a community hall, being later replaced by the present building. Notable amongst the businesses was the "Gent's ready-



Climax Hospital as it looks today.

to-wear" owned by S. E. (Si) Minty. Si was the first postmaster in the village, a position he held for 20 years. He was also one of the first village councillors. Si had home-steaded North of Climax in 1910. Other business men were J. Earley, J. Hawkins, draymen, F. Molleken and Silver Dollar, pool and barber. Part of Molleken's pool room was partitioned off for a dance hall and Saturday night dances were regularly held. Gryde & Cuthbertson, Hardware, J. E. Gryde & Climax Trading Co., general merchants, Geo. Barr, Beaver Lumber and Imperial Lumber Yards; Nerada Bros. and Carl Gryde, garage and auto dealers; restaurants; Climax Cafe and Dad's Doughnuts, Mrs. Rudh, J. Baker (butcher); J. R. Hopkins, lawyer; Ab. Smith (the Land Man); H. A. Hinds, jeweler; J. A. McGillivray, insurance. One elevator, in addition to those now operating, was burned down, namely, "Lake of the Woods."

The village was incorporated in 1924 and the first council was composed of Messrs. J. E. Gryde, S. E. Minty and Fred Withers, with J. R. Hopkins, secretary.

Prior to the construction of grain elevators grain buyers started up in business and grain was hauled here from the East as far as Orkney. The result was a huge pile of wheat which prompted the Board of Trade to adopt the slogan of "Climax, the Million Bushel Town." Climax Board of Trade was very active from the day it was inaugurated in 1923 to present day.

Hospital Services were provided to Climax and district almost as soon as the Townsite was surveyed in a building, now known as the

Skalbeck building, but then operated by Nurse Sinclair (later Mrs. Hinkson) as a Hospital. In 1924 Rural Municipalities of Climax and Frontier, and the Village of Climax, co-operatively purchased the building on Main Street, now in operation as a nurses' residence. This building was operated as a Hospital for 26 years, under various controls and financing, but valuable service was rendered the public. Much could be written about this first Climax Hospital, a building quite unfit for the purpose it was used and the many emergency operations carried out in the small operation room, and great credit must be given the doctors who officiated as well as the volunteer nursing and assistance given doctors when other surgical help was scarce. Amongst those who assisted may be mentioned Mrs., A. H. Stevens, Mrs. W. Cuthbertson and Mrs. R. Kavanagh.

The present fine modern hospital was built largely from funds raised by Climax Board of Trade, but the first payment into the building fund was done by 10 Climax residents who purchased an Irish Sweepstake ticket on the understanding that if the ticket was lucky, winnings were to be given one half to establish a Hospital Building Fund, the other half divided 10 ways. Result the building fund was started with the sum of \$2,400.00. Mrs. L. B. Smith also operated a Nursing Home during this period, or part of it, mainly for maternity cases.

The first baby born in the newly started village of Climax was a daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Jesse East on the 28th day of June, 1923. In honor of her being the first arri-



val to the village by birth, the Board of Trade at their sports day in 1925, two years later, presented her with a gold locket and chain. Her parents not being present, the locket was received by her grandfather, William East. The name given her was Martha Climax East, the Martha being after her nurse, Martha Sinclair. Martha Climax East is now Mrs. Walter Reid and resides at Waldeck, Sask.

Mrs. G. L. Greenlay was the first lady homesteader south of the White Mud. She was also Mrs. Young's first lady visitor. Gryde Brothers moved into the Waldville district in 1910. Mr. and Mrs. W. Dell moved on to their homestead in 1920. Their's was the first child born South of the White Mud, Oct. 10, 1910.

The first church services were held at the Huntley and Young homes. A student officiated.

First church services in the town were held in the Community Hall and the School. In 1926 both the United Church and the Anglican Church erected buildings. The first United Church minister was Rev. D. F. Freek and the first ordained Anglican incumbent was Rev. J. Jolley.

Stonepile Lutheran Church was organized at Waldville in 1912, meeting at K. Gryde's. The minister was Rev. Shurson.

The first child baptized was Arthur Homme. The first registered nurse was Mrs. Stocker, whose farm was the scene of the first recorded picnic South of the river. It was held in the Summer of 1911.

The first recorded death was the infant of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Olson, interment being made at Waldville, George Ringham and Bert Hillier also being buried at Waldville. The first wedding, conducted at the home of the bride, was Josie Gryde and Paul Vold.

The first Sports Day in Climax was on August 5th, 1924.

When the First World War broke out a number of the men South of the river volunteered, the earliest of them enlisting at Moose Jaw in

the 5th and 128th Battalions.

In 1915 a battalion was organized with Lt.-Col. Judge Smyth as commanding officer and named 209th Battalion. Some of those who enlisted in Moose Jaw were transferred to the 209th and due to the number who went from the White Mud area a platoon was named the White Mud Platoon.

At the termination of that war a reserve unit was organized, perpetuating the 27th Light Horse and 209th Battalion. Squadron headquarters were located at Climax. The officer commanding the unit was Lt.-Col. Greenlay who was succeeded by Lt.-Col. Wm. Van Allen. Col. Van Allen did much to make the unit popular, and on the outbreak of the Second World War, the 14th were absorbed by the 16/22 Sask. Horse. Climax squadron supplied several commissioned and non-commissioned officers, amongst them being Col. Van Allen who reverted from the rank of full colonel. By that time Lt.-Col. J. R. Hopkins was OC of the unit and he was appointed second in command. Major W. Cuthbertson raised a transportation engineering unit and had as one of his officers Lt. Hodgson Goodfellow. NCO's were D. Mitchell, quartermaster-sergeant, and P. B. Cosgrove, staff sergeant. Officers of the 16/22 included Lt. H. S. Stevens and C. N. Gryde, both attaining the rank of captain. Si Minty was quartermaster sergeant of an ordinance unit and Fred Withers sergeant-major (both veterans of the first war). Corporal J. P. Tolson and a number of other ranks joined from the Climax district.

Mention should be made of the Climax baseball team, first named Climax Advertisers, organized in the spring of 1925. "Bob" Robinson must be given credit for work in bringing the team up to high standard. In this he was assisted by Gordon Ramsey, who took over the drug store in the Spring of 1925. Gordon brought up Horace Comartin who had caught for him in Eastern Saskatchewan. Gordon and "CO" made a formidable battery

and much of the ultimate success of the Climax Advertisers was due to this battery. Others on the team included Bob and Dick Morrison, Oscar Homme, Gec. Morey, Frank Davidson, Monkey Wyman & Casey Anderson. Prior to the organization of the Climax Advertisers, a team composed of local players

organized in 1924 gave a good account of themselves, their chief opponents being the Waldville Wildcats. Jack Goodman was catcher for the Climax aggregation and both teams were strengthened by members of the railroad construction crew.



CLIMAX ADVERTISERS BASEBALL TEAM 1925

Back row: Dick Morrison, unknown, Monkey Wyman, Bob Robinson, H. E. Comartin, O. Homme, Gordon Ramsey. Front row: Frank Davidson, Bob Morrison, and Casey Anderson.

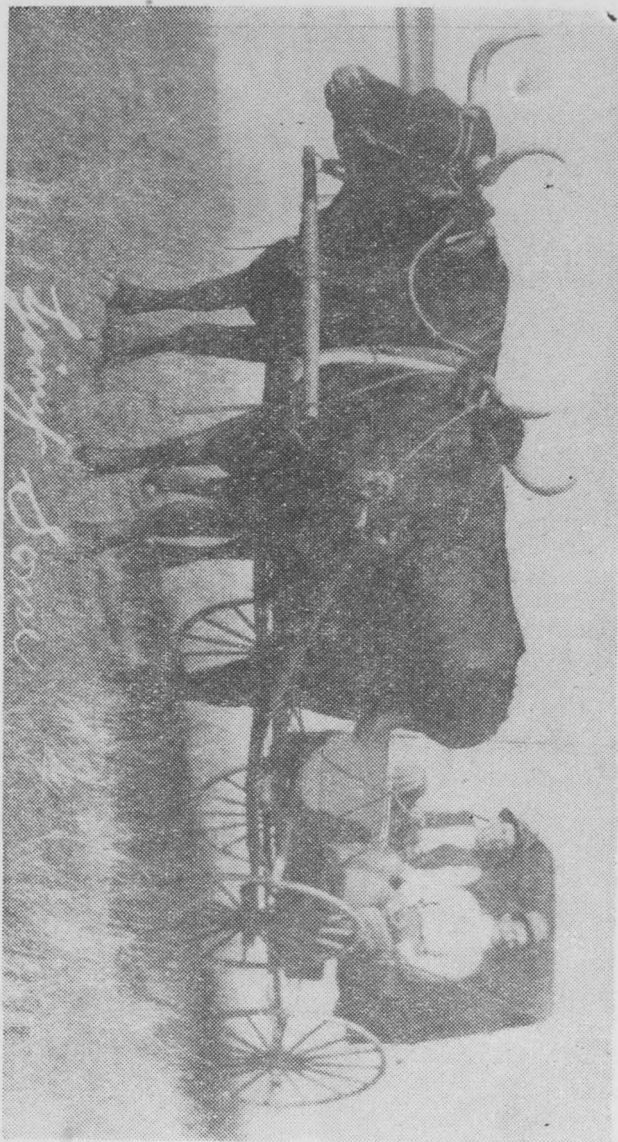


## Welcome Visitors and Pioneers.

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author wishes to acknowledge with thanks to the many who assisted in this narrative, particularly mentioning Mrs. T. Holm and Mrs. H. Otterson, who furnished a lot of the early history.

No doubt there are other items of interest that are not included in this narrative. If so, we regret the omissions. They just didn't come to our notice.



CHAS. GRIMSHAW and CHAS. NEVILLE out for a buggy ride in the  
good old days





Here is the famous "Lone Tree" from which the Rural Municipality and the lake took its name. Unfortunately it was cut down in 1912





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